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Spending For What?

National disturbance over the United States' deficit position in international balance of payments and the outflow of American gold has sent many experts scurrying to find the causes.

Among the causes turned up are: Heavy capital investments by American businessmen abroad, tourists, military expenditures, foreign aid—and American embassies and consulates.

Operation of a diplomatic corps, like international defense, is a necessity. Indeed, without it the foreign trade that does most to contribute to United States income from international sources would wither. But the State Department is not exempt from scrutiny in the balance-of-payments crisis.

Career diplomat ELLIS BRIGGS, a former American ambassador to several countries, has said in his book "Farewell to Foggy Bottom," that United States embassies and consulates are heavily over-staffed. His concern is for efficiency, but there should be some interest in the overseas spending that finds this outlet.

The State Department's Foreign Service had more than 9,000 American employes as of Sept. 30, 1963, plus 10,000 foreign nationals. The foreign employes held such jobs as chauffeur-ing, typing and clerical work. The Americans included 4,017 in the staff corps, 3,768 Foreign Service officers and 1,343 Foreign Service reserve officers. The Foreign Service employe generally begins his career as a Class 8 Government worker at \$5,795 a year and can rise to Class 1 which pays \$19,650. An ambassador at a major post is paid \$27,500 a year. Such people spend much of their income abroad.

Added to these are employes of other agencies under the State Department: the Agency for International Development (foreign aid), the Peace Corps, the United States In-

formation Agency and the United States Army Control and Disarmament Agency. Hidden within this mass of State Department workers are numerous agents of the Central Intelligence Agency, whose foreign spending is known to be enormous despite its disguise.

Mr. BRIGGS, whose experience as a career diplomat should be worth considerable, does not advocate American withdrawal from the foreign scene. He is not what we now call a "new isolationist." But he does believe that State Department efficiency in foreign operations could be increased by reducing these overseas staffs. His reasoning is buttressed by ALFRED PARKER, executive director of Tax Foundation, Inc., and former aide to the House Ways and Means Committee, who recently noted: "Control thus tends to diminish as governmental activity grows."

Extra hands never increase efficiency. But they do add to cost. If reduction of Foreign Service personnel overseas can add efficiency of operation and at the same time reduce our balance-of-payments deficit, it is a move that the State Department should make, and which Congress should insist upon.

The record of the State Department's fumbling in Indonesia, Egypt, the Congo (and any number of the newly independent African nations), and in the Soviet Union often makes Americans wonder whether we are doing anything except set up targets for anti-American demonstrations. The misjudgments of the CIA—never publicly revealed—raise a question about that agency's argument that it needs listening posts in our embassies. The back-breaking straw is that Foreign Service efficiency is decreased as the size of our diplomatic corps increases.

Mingled with all of this is the fact that a cutback in the employes engaged in this questionable service could improve America's balance-of-payments position. The proposition deserves sincere consideration.